

WE CLAIM:

1. A method for providing a notification that an event has occurred, said method comprising:

5 receiving a request to provide a notification in response to the occurrence of said event to a client computer, said request comprising a description of said event and a user identifier;

determining whether said event has occurred; and

10 in response to determining that said event has occurred, identifying a network address for said client computer based on said user identifier, and transmitting a request to the client computer at said network address to display a visual indication that said event has occurred.

2. The method of Claim 1, wherein said visual indication comprises a user interface window including a description of said event.

15 3. The method of Claim 2, wherein said user interface window is displayed over one or more currently active windows.

4. The method of Claim 3, wherein said user interface window further comprises one or more hyperlinks referencing a network location having additional information regarding said event.

20 5. The method of Claim 4, wherein said request to provide a notification further comprises data for customizing said visual indication, wherein transmitting a request to said client computer to display a visual indication that said event has occurred further comprises transmitting said data for customizing said visual indication, and wherein said user interface window further comprises said data for customizing said visual indication.

6. The method of Claim 1, wherein identifying a network address for said client computer based on said user identifier comprises querying a network service provider or other network database for said network address of said client computer.

7. The method of Claim 1, wherein said request to display a visual indication that said event has occurred is transmitted to said client computer over a high-speed always-on network connection.

8. The method of Claim 1, wherein said request to provide a notification in response to the occurrence of said event is received at a business web server.

9. A method for providing a notification that an event has occurred, said method comprising:

transmitting a request to provide a notification in response to the occurrence of said event to a server computer, said request comprising a description of said event and a user identifier;

receiving from said server computer a request to display a visual indication that said event has occurred, said visual indication comprising a user interface window including a description of said event; and

displaying said visual indication.

10. The method of Claim 9, wherein said user interface window is displayed over one or more currently active windows.

11. The method of Claim 10, wherein said user interface window further comprises one or more hyperlinks referencing a network location having additional information regarding said event.

12. The method of Claim 11, wherein said request to provide a notification further comprises data for customizing said visual indication, wherein said request to display a visual indication that said event has occurred further comprises said data for

customizing said visual indication, and wherein said user interface window further comprises said data for customizing said visual indication.

13. A computer-readable medium comprising computer-readable instructions which, when executed by a computer, cause the computer to perform the method of  
5 Claim 1.

14. A computer-readable medium comprising computer-readable instructions which, when executed by a computer, cause the computer to perform the method of  
Claim 9.

15. A computer-controlled apparatus capable of performing the method of  
10 Claim 1.

16. A computer-controlled apparatus capable of performing the method of  
Claim 9.

17. A system for providing a notification that an event has occurred, said system comprising:

15 a client computer comprising a display, a memory, a central processing unit, and a storage device containing computer-readable instructions for execution on said central processing unit, said computer-readable instructions operative to cause the client computer to transmit a request to provide a notification in response to the occurrence of said event to a server computer, said request comprising a description of said event and a  
20 user identifier, to receive from said server computer a request to display a visual indication that said event has occurred via a high-speed always-on network connection, said visual indication comprising a user interface window including a description of said event, and to display said visual indication on said display; and

25 a server computer comprising a memory, a central processing unit, and a storage device containing computer-readable instructions for execution on said central processing unit of said server computer, said computer-readable instructions operative to cause the

server computer to receive said request to provide a notification from said client computer, to determine whether said event has occurred, to identify a network address for said client computer based on said user identifier in response to determining that said event has occurred, and to transmit said request to said client computer to display a visual indication that said event has occurred at said network address.

18. The system of Claim 17, further comprising a web server computer, and wherein said visual indication that said event has occurred further comprises a hyperlink, and wherein said client computer is further operative to receive a selection of said hyperlink and, based on said selection, to retrieve and display additional information regarding said event from said web server computer.

19. The system of Claim 17, further comprising a billing server computer, and wherein said visual indication that said event has occurred further comprises a hyperlink, and wherein said client computer is further operative to receive a selection of said hyperlink and, based on said selection, to place an order with said billing server computer.

20. The system of Claim 17, further comprising a calendaring server computer, and wherein said visual indication that said event has occurred further comprises a hyperlink, and wherein said client computer is further operative to receive a selection of said hyperlink and, based on said selection, to create an appointment with said calendaring server computer.

21. The system of Claim 17, wherein said visual indication that said event has occurred further comprises a hyperlink, and wherein said client computer is further operative to receive a selection of said hyperlink and, based on said selection, to place a telephone call.

22. The system of Claim 17, wherein said visual indication that said event has occurred further comprises a hyperlink, and wherein said client computer is further operative to receive a selection of said hyperlink and, based on said selection, send a data message.